

# Tips 4 Grownups:



The transition from childhood to adolescence is a time of special, and sometimes painful, development and change for young girls. Studies show that girls tend to lose self-confidence and self-worth during this pivotal age, becoming less physically active, performing less well

in school, and neglecting their own interests and aspirations. It's during these years that girls become newly vulnerable to negative outside influences and to mixed messages about risky behaviors. This is a very important time for the adults in young girls' lives to give them love and support and reassure them that they are not alone. By helping girls develop skills and confidence, you lower their chances of becoming involved in high-risk activities that can limit their life opportunities. In this first phase, the **Girl Power!** campaign will focus on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Future phases will address physical activity, nutrition, premature sexual activity, mental health, and other issues.

The following are some ways to encourage **Girl Power!** in your daughter, granddaughter, students, sisters, and any other young girls in your life:

## **BELIEVE IN GIRLS.**

Believe in girls and their abilities by praising their attempts as well as their achievements. Encourage them to express their opinions, feelings, and beliefs in positive ways rather than through getting involved in unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, drug use and other risky activities.

## **TALK AND LISTEN TO GIRLS.**

Talk with girls and *listen* to them. Be open in your discussions and if you disagree with some of their ideas, discuss your concerns with them rather than shut them out. By keeping an open line of communication with them, you are letting them know that they can turn to you in times of trouble and need. Showing girls that you respect them as individuals and care about their views encourages them to respect themselves.

## **MAKE IT CLEAR THAT DRUGS ARE WRONG.**

Help girls understand that drugs are illegal, dangerous, and wrong. Always be very clear with your "no use" expectations. Let them know that by using these substances, they can not only hurt themselves now, but that they could also ruin their long-term chances to lead healthy, productive, and happy lives. To get the straight facts about the dangers and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 1-800-729-6686.

## **HELP THEM MAKE GOOD DECISIONS.**

Help girls get the necessary tools to make good decisions and resist peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, and drugs or to participate in any other risky activities. By helping girls develop skills in critical thinking, communications, and building solid relationships, you help empower them to handle themselves in awkward and potentially dangerous situations. If you need help in doing this, call SAMHSA's NCADI at 1-800-729-6686 to order a free copy of *Keeping Youth Drug Free: A Guide for Parents, Grandparents, Elders, Mentors, and Other Caregivers*.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention



## Tips 4 Grownups:



Keep It Going!



### GET INVOLVED.

Get involved in girls' education. Encourage them to see difficult subjects as exciting challenges they can overcome rather than as impossible tasks. Share with them stories of the difficulties you went through in school to make them see that they are not the only ones who have ever had problems with their schoolwork. Encourage them to talk to their teachers and counselors and offer to help them with their schoolwork.

### ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EATING HABITS.

Help girls develop a positive body image by encouraging healthy lifelong habits such as eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. Be aware that most girls are very much influenced by society's views of "beauty" and "perfect" bodies. As a result of this influence, too many girls develop eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia in their attempts to achieve these "perfect" looks. Let girls know that models and stars have teams of professional make-up artists, hair stylists, and personal trainers to help them look the way they do! Encourage girls to respect their own bodies rather than abuse them by going on unhealthy diets, exercising excessively, or being physically inactive.

### DISCUSS TOPICS LIKE TV AND MUSIC.

Help girls develop critical thinking and questioning skills by taking time to watch TV or listen to music with them. Discuss the images shown and messages given and how these can affect the way a person thinks and behaves. This will teach them to question what they see and hear and to learn how to form their own opinions.

### SUPPORT GIRLS' GOALS.

Actively support their goals by providing as many opportunities as you can for them to participate in sports, the arts, and other activities such as neighborhood youth groups, faith groups, and volunteer organizations. In this way you will help them explore their interests, learn new skills, make new friends, and become competent and confident people.

### PLAN SPECIAL ACTIVITIES.

With the girls in your life, plan special activities that you can do together and include their friends when possible. This will not only strengthen the bonds between you but will also enable you to get to know their friends and peers.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT GIRL POWER!

Get involved! Learn more about the Girl Power! campaign by calling 1-800-729-6686. Bring the information to your volunteer organization, faith group, and place of employment to help raise awareness in all sectors of your community of the needs and concerns of young girls. Volunteer your time to mentor a young girl. Remember, girls need positive role models to help them learn how to develop their Girl Power!



For information about Girl Power!, make a FREE telephone call to SAMHSA's NCADI at 1-800-729-6686 or check online at <[www.health.org/gpower](http://www.health.org/gpower)>.